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WESTERN BIRDS

journal of California Field Ornithologists

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WESTERN BIRDS

Volume 4, Number 1, 1973

EDITORIAL

With this issue *California Birds* becomes *Western Birds*, and the journal's geographic coverage expands to encompass states and provinces from the Rocky Mountains westward, including Alaska and Hawaii, western Texas, and adjacent portions of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. This expansion is designed to increase the flow of manuscripts, the shortage of which has made it impossible to publish *California Birds* on a regular schedule, and to provide a medium for publication of field studies from those areas of the West where no state or other local publication of a similar nature exists.

The general content and objectives of the journal, as set forth in *California Birds*, Volume 1, Number 1, will continue, but it is hoped to broaden the appeal of *Western Birds* by publishing several new features. One such feature, a series of photographic essays by some of the West's outstanding bird photographers, will be edited by Arnold Small. The first of this series, portraying the very fine work of Herbert Clarke, appears in this issue. Also being solicited are papers that will help birders locate birds in a given area but which at the same time will add significantly to published knowledge of bird distribution, status, or population in the area.

A new Editorial Board, including leading amateur and professional bird students from each western state and province, has been organized through the efforts of Laurence C. Binford, Mrs. Hubert Fry, and Stephen F. Bailey. Editorial Board members will solicit papers and promote membership in their respective areas, and review papers within their particular field of knowledge.

The support and encouragement received from active field ornithologists in many areas of the West is greatly appreciated. Continuance of this support, particularly contributions in the form of papers and notes, will assure the success of *Western Birds*. The opportunities for making a significant contribution in this field are boundless, and are open to everyone. Many individuals have expressed willingness to assist those who desire help in preparing observations for publication. As a final note, I want to stress that criticism and suggestions are always welcome. *AMC*

WESTERN BIRD PHOTOGRAPHERS

Most birders tend to shy away from that aspect of bird study involving photography. Taking fine photographs of wild birds in their natural habitats requires skill, patience, and technical equipment of high caliber and most amateur ornithologists are not prepared to invest the necessary time and money in that phase of the hobby. Those who attempt it are frequently discouraged by the difficulty of the task and abandon their efforts after they realize the frustrations involved. Happily, however, more and more birders are carrying 35 millimeter cameras and short telephoto lenses with them in the field and when rare birds are sighted, identifiable (albeit not portrait) photos can be obtained without the necessity of shooting the bird in question.

However, all of us enjoy the fruits of the labors of such photographers as Herb Clarke of Glendale, California. He has been photographing birds for almost 20 years and the skill of his efforts is seen in the accompanying photographs. By profession, Herb Clarke is a salesman, but he devotes most of his free time to this completely unrelated endeavor. He has written numerous articles about birds, has co-authored the soon-to-be published *Birds of the West*, has a U.S. life list of well over 600 species, has traveled far overseas with his wife Olga in search of birds, and personally has been watching birds for more than 30 years.

This is the first in a series of pictorial essays by some of the West's (and the Nation's) finest bird photographers. Our policy will be to include others such as this from time to time, as well as photographs of rare and unusual birds in the West. *Arnold Small, 608 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210.*

FIFTEEN YEARS IN A BLIND

Herbert Clarke

My goal is to photograph satisfactorily all the species of birds of the United States. At this date my picture "life list" stands at well over 300. But I still have not decided what is a satisfactory photograph. I find that I am continually trying to get a better picture of an already photographed species.

Because I photograph strictly for personal pleasure, I follow my own set of rules for procedure and composition. I do not concern myself with what is salable or desirable to other people. Even so, many of my photographs have appeared in various publications, earning enough money to more than pay for my hobby.

The birds in my photographs are wild and unrestrained. No man-made object or out-of-place item is allowed to appear in the pictures. I discard photographs in which the subject is not sharply focused and properly exposed. Usually I throw away most of my pictures, much to the enrichment of Kodak.

The equipment I use has been acquired and modified after much trial and error. I use a motorized Nikon for stalking, taking flight pictures, and remote control work. My other camera is a Nikkormat. Its fast shutter synchronization (1/125th sec.) is excellent for use with electronic flash.

Depending upon the size of the bird and its distance from the camera, I employ a variety of lenses ranging in size from a 35mm wide angle to a 600mm telephoto. Those most frequently used are a 400mm F4.5 Auto-Nikkor for "setups" when shooting from a blind, and a specially adapted 500mm F4.5 Takumar mounted on a gunstock for hand held operations.

I shoot mostly in color because both good color prints and black and white prints can be made from slides. Only Kodachrome II film is used. Its fine grain and excellent color rendition more than make up for its slow emulsion speed. I willingly accept this handicap in those low light situations when a faster film would permit the use of a higher shutter speed to stop action or a smaller lens setting for greater depth of focus.

Flash is used whenever possible. Two electronic units are most often utilized, each one set close to and on either side of, the subject. Consistent, evenly illuminated exposures can be thus obtained while stopping the movement of the bird. Each flash is powered by a 510 volt

battery-pack adapted so it can be switched on and off at the camera to conserve power during the bird's absence. Use of battery-packs provides two important advantages. The units recycle quickly for second-chance shots and allow extended use in the field without the bother of recharging. There are times when three flash units are used. The greater illumination is helpful for more distant shots or in stopping down for added depth of field. Usually the bird quickly gets used to all the paraphernalia and goes about its business paying little or no attention to the clicking of the shutter or flashing of the lights.

In going afield on a photographic expedition I take, in addition to the usual camera equipment, such items as ropes, aluminum foil (for makeshift reflectors), a plastic jug, a lightweight homemade blind, and an eight-foot step ladder. That ladder being carried far into the wilderness by car, hand, and boat has elicited all sorts of comments when viewed by disbelieving eyes. Each situation presents its own unique set of problems to solve and having a seemingly minor item often has saved the day. For instance, the plastic jug when used as a artificial water drip in the desert, attracts an astounding variety of usually difficult-to-photograph small birds.

Even with elaborate preparations, I have been thwarted by my unpredictable quarry or I have made some mistake in the excitement of the moment. After all these years I still can get "buck fever" when something unexpected happens suddenly.

All the illustrations here are reproductions made from color slides which were taken in southern California.

2027 El Arbolita Drive, Glendale, California 91208

Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*), Desert Center, California, April 1973, 300mm lens, electronic flash F8.0.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*), Goose Lake, California, June 1967, 400mm lens, 1/250 F6.3.

Common Snipe (*Capella gallinago*), San Diego, California, October 1968, 400mm lens, 1/250 F5.6

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*), Desert Center, California, April 1972, 500mm lens, electronic flash F6.3.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), Malibu, California, November 1972, 500mm lens, 1/250 F4.5.

Le Conte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), Maricopa, California, March 1970, 500mm lens, 1/250 F6.3.

California Quail (*Lophortyx californicus*), Glendale, California, June 1964, 400mm lens, 1/250 F5.6.

Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*), Twentynine Palms, California, April 1969, 400mm lens, electronic flash F5.6.

Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), Maricopa, California, April 1968, 400mm lens, 1/250 F5 6.

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*), Desert Center, California, April 1972, 500mm lens, electronic flash F6.3.

THE RED-SHOULDERED HAWK IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

Sanford R. Wilbur

The Pacific Coast race of the Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus elegans*) has been the object of ornithological concern for many years. Shortly after the turn of the century, Willett (1912) noted its apparent increasing scarcity in portions of coastal Southern California, and Dawson (1924) thought the species was "sharply on the wane". More recently, the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (1968) included it on a list of "status undetermined" wildlife – possibly rare or endangered but sufficient information not available. After a partial examination of distribution records, Cohen (1970) concluded that western Red-shouldered Hawk numbers were reduced and would continue to decline due to habitat loss. However, Brown (1971) analyzed Christmas Bird Count data and could see no significant change in California populations from 1950 through 1969. Therefore, current status has remained unclear.

From January 1970 through July 1972, I continued to add to the Red-shouldered Hawk record by personal observation, continuing review of the literature, and through inspection of the field notes of cooperators. Results of this review are discussed below.

CURRENT DISTRIBUTION AND NUMBERS

Northwestern California. Cohen (1970) located a few scattered records of Red-shouldered Hawks in Del Norte and Humboldt counties, and concluded that a small (possibly recently established) population is found there. I compiled several other records for various parts of these two counties, and also for central Mendocino County. Red-shouldered Hawks apparently occur throughout the western portion of these three Counties. No major population centers are evident, but the birds are widespread.

San Francisco Bay Area. B. D. Parmeter (pers. comm.) considers the Red-shouldered Hawk a common year-long resident in Sonoma County, particularly at Santa Rosa. It is also found along the coast of Sonoma County, and in adjacent Marin County. While the Sonoma-Marin area is the main population center, the Red-shouldered Hawk occurs sparsely in most other Bay Area counties.

Central Coastal California. Cohen (1970) presents information that suggests Red-shouldered Hawks may be increasing in the area from Santa Cruz south through Santa Barbara County. That sizeable populations occur in the Monterey, Morro Bay and Santa Barbara areas is borne out by recent Christmas Bird Counts. The biggest concentrations appear to be near the coast, but birds also are seen in canyon areas inland.

Southern California. Although human population expansion in Southern California has reduced wildlife habitat, the Red-shouldered Hawk is still widespread. Large numbers are found in Orange and San

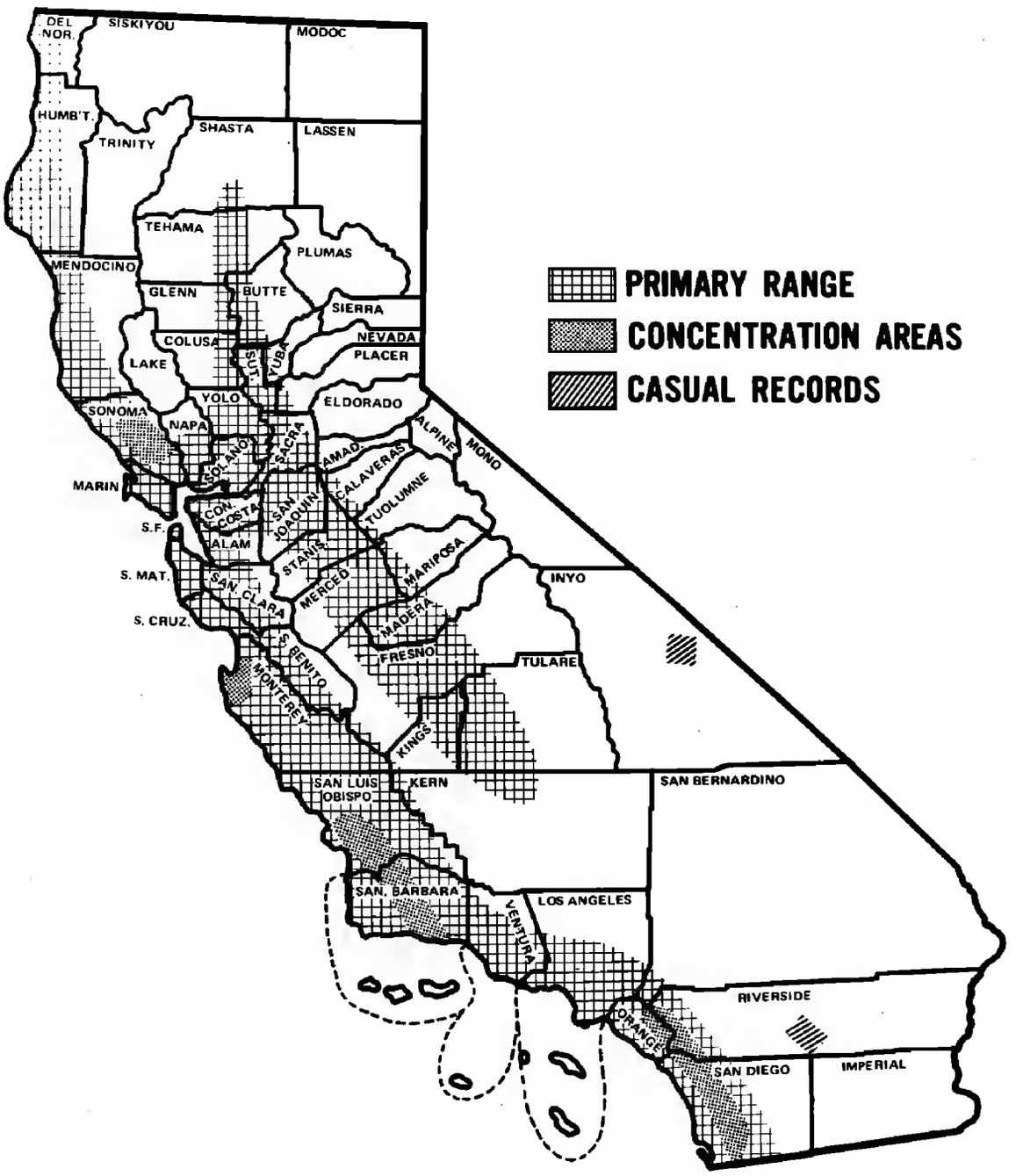

Figure 1. Distribution of the Red-shouldered Hawk in California.

Diego counties, and smaller populations in adjacent areas. Cohen (1970) found an apparently resident population near Victorville, and the species has been reported nesting in Morongo Valley (G. McCaskie, pers. comm.), both in San Bernardino County.

Sacramento-San Joaquin Valleys. There seem to be no major congregation areas in the Central Valley, but there are records from scattered localities throughout the Valley and adjacent foothill areas.

Outside California. Recently, Red-shouldered Hawks have been recorded once in extreme southwestern Oregon, and several times near Las Vegas, Nevada. I found only one recent record for northwestern Baja California, but the species has been considered resident there (Grinnell 1928). The observations in Nevada are interesting because they are for all seasons and have included up to four individuals, suggesting more than occasional wandering.

DISCUSSION

Because Red-shouldered Hawks inhabit wooded country and are quiet and retiring except during courtship (Bent 1937), they probably go unnoticed and unreported by many observers. Therefore, lack of records in a particular area does not necessarily mean the species is not found there. Their semi-solitary habits and usual preference for scattered tracts of streamside woodland also makes population estimates difficult, and few researchers have attempted them. Also, because numbers have usually been recorded in such terms as "common", "conspicuous" or "uncommon", it is difficult to judge population changes by comparing reports made during different time periods and by different people.

Probably the best indications of change are: 1) whether Red-shouldered Hawks are now absent in areas where they once were present, 2) whether they now occur in areas formerly unoccupied, and 3) whether there have been obvious increases or decreases in the size of local populations.

The general range of the western Red-shouldered Hawk is given by Grinnell and Miller (1944) as the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and the southern coastal area of California. They listed few records north of San Francisco Bay, and none for the southeastern desert portions of the State. Numbers apparently had been reduced in some areas by this time due to progressive human occupancy of the land, but Grinnell and Miller gave no indication of major changes in the range of the species.

Cohen (1970) lists a number of localities for which he could find no Red-shouldered Hawk records after 1939. However, I have subsequently found recent records for most of these areas, or for nearby locations. Therefore, although this species may have been displaced from certain limited areas of its former range, Red-shouldered Hawks apparently have not been lost from any major segment of their original range within California.

In contrast, this species is now found regularly in some areas for which few historical records exist. Part of this increase and apparent range expansion is perhaps the result of more observers in the field and more regularity in reporting or, as suggested by Cohen (1970) for birds found near Victorville, San Bernardino County, the result of birds being displaced in certain areas and moving to others. However, early observers would probably not have missed the current large population in the Santa Rosa (Sonoma County) area or the scattered, but apparently rather large total population of Humboldt and Del Norte counties. Sightings near Las Vegas, Nevada, at various times of the year hint of a population establishing itself in an area for which there seem to be no records prior to 1969. It appears that the Red-shouldered Hawk not only occurs throughout its former range generally, but may also be occupying areas not inhabited historically.

This review suggests that the following changes in numbers and distribution have occurred: *Northwestern California.* Since this area is seldom mentioned in early literature, the regularity with which Red-shouldered Hawks are now seen may indicate some increase. *San Francisco Bay Area.* Current commonness around Santa Rosa seems to indicate an increase there. In other parts of the Bay Area, the species is rare to uncommon, indicating little change since the 1920's (Grinnell and Wythe 1927). *Central Coast.* Only one of six early (1884-1908) bird lists for the northern half of this region mentions the Red-shouldered Hawk. This would indicate it has always been rare. Currently it is widespread, but generally the population is of low density. Probably no major change in status has occurred. In the southern portion of this region, Cohen (1970) feels some local populations have decreased in size, but others have increased. No overall comparisons with past populations seem possible. The Red-shouldered Hawk is now quite common in this region, particularly around Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. *Southern California.* Although there presumably was a decrease in Red-shouldered Hawks in this region prior to 1920 (Willett 1912), there is little evidence of decrease

since then. Evermann (1886) considered the species common in Ventura County; it still is, particularly in the Ojai-Santa Paula area. Willett (1912) stated there were a "few pairs" left in Los Angeles County; today, there are obviously more than that. Willett (1933) recorded it as scarce or extinct in the San Bernardino area; today it is uncommon there but apparently still widely distributed. Dixon's (1928) San Diego County record of 23 nesting locations within 30 miles of Escondido appears comparable to Mrs. Alice Fries' 1972 record (pers. comm.) of 13 active nests within 20 miles of Escondido. All things considered, the Red-shouldered Hawk may by as abundant in this region now as it was 50 years ago. *Sacramento-San Joaquin Valleys.* There are no records available for Sacramento Valley that give an indication of past population sizes. Today in that area, the Red-shouldered Hawk is widespread but relatively uncommon. It must have been fairly common in the San Joaquin Valley: Belding (1879) lists it as "very common" at Stockton; Fisher (1893) notes it as "abundant" on the Kings River, and "not uncommon" at Visalia; Linton (1908) lists it as "fairly common" at Buena Vista Lake; and Grinnell and Storer (1929) found it in "moderate numbers" along the Merced River. Today it is widespread in the San Joaquin Valley and adjacent foothills, but in few places could it be considered very common. Therefore, the Red-shouldered Hawk likely is less common than it was prior to 1920, but when the population decline occurred is not clear.

Overall, it appears there may have been some range expansion since the 1920's, and no major declines except perhaps in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valleys. Red-shouldered Hawks are currently widespread in a variety of habitats and, from general observation, appear to be reproducing successfully. Although continuing loss of habitat may be expected in certain parts of the range, the species appears adaptable to a greater variety of living situations than was previously thought. Red-shouldered Hawks now nest in residential areas (e.g., Ojai, Ventura County) some distance from water, and are suspected of nesting at previously unoccupied inland areas in southern California and Nevada. Evidently some water development projects have actually increased the attractiveness of certain areas (Dixon 1928, Cohen 1970). With increasing concern over wanton shooting of raptors and with better law enforcement, there is good reason to be satisfied with the current status of this species in the Western States, and to be optimistic about its future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to Mrs. Alice Fries, Dr. B. D. Parmeter and Dr. C. F. Yocom for allowing me use of their field notes.

APPENDIX

Records included below were picked as representative of recent distribution and numbers of the Red-shouldered Hawk in western North America. Abbreviations used are: fn, field notes; AFN, *Audubon Field Notes*; AB, *American Birds*; CBC, Christmas Bird Counts.

Northwestern California

Del Norte County – 1, Klamath, 11 Feb. 1967 (Yocom fn); 1, Crescent City, 15 Aug. 1969 (AFN 24:90, 1970); 2, Smith River Valley, April-May 1970 (AFN 24:639, 1970); 2, Fort Dick, early April 1971 (AB 25:794, 1971). *Humboldt County* – 1, Korbel, 10 April 1943; 1, Humboldt Bay, 18 Sept. 1943; 1, Eureka, 7 Oct. 1943; 1, Freshwater Lagoon, 6 Jan. 1944; 1, Samoa, 29 Sept. 1946 (all above from W. Anderson, Yocom fn); 2, Arcata, 25 May 1954 (Stampf, Yocom fn); 1 (collected), Willow Creek, 10 May 1953; 1, Willow Creek, 30 May 1953 (Talmadge, Condor 55:315, 1953); 1, Orick, April-May 1957 (AFN 11:374, 1957); 2, Prairie Creek State Park, 5 Oct. 1958 (Yocom fn); 2 (courting), Arcata, 9 April 1960 (Yocom fn); 1, Orick, 16 Jan.-21 Fe. 1970 (AFN 24:535, 1970); 3, Humboldt Bay area, 27-29 Nov. 1970 (AB 25:101, 1971); 5, Humboldt Bay Area CBC, 2 Jan. 1972 (AB 26:502, 1972). *Mendocino County* – 1, Willits, 4 May 1957 (Legg, Yocom fn); 1, Willits, 13 May 1967 (Yocom fn); 3, Ukiah, 10 April 1971 (Wilbur fn).

San Francisco Bay Area

Sonoma County – Numerous records, 1-2 birds each, Santa Rosa area, 1956-1970, all months (Parmeter fn); 1, Duncan's Mills, 8 Dec. 1963 (Parmeter fn); 1, Petaluma, April 1964 (Parmeter fn); 1, Coleman Valley, 21 Dec. 1965 (Parmeter fn); 1, Duncan's Mills, 10 June 1967 (Parmeter fn); 1, Bodega Lagoon, 18 Oct. 1968 (Parmeter fn); 1, Guerneville, 31 May 1971 (Parmeter fn). 1969-1970 Christmas Bird Counts: coastal Sonoma County 3, 4, 18; Santa Rosa area 37, 39, 21. *Napa County* – 1969-1971 Angwin area CBC 3, 4, 8. *Solano County* – 1, Benicia, 31 Dec. 1969 (AFN 24:436, 1970). *Marin County* – 1969-1971 Point Reyes Peninsula CBC 6, 14, 12. *Alameda County* – 2, Fremont area CBC, 27 Dec. 1970 (AB 25:487. 1971). *San Mateo County* – 1, Crystal Springs Reservoir, 27 Dec. 1969 (AFN 24:439, 1970); 1, Crystal Springs Res., 2 Jan. 1971 (AB 25:486, 1971). *Santa Clara County* – 4 nesting pairs, Santa Clara Valley, summer 1969 (AFN 23:690, 1969); 1 each, 1969-1970 San Jose CBC.

Central Coastal California

Santa Cruz County – 1969-1971 Santa Cruż CBC 1, 2, 1. *Monterey County* – 1, Hastings Reserve, 23 May 1970 (Anon., Sanderling 27:2, 1970). 1969-1971 Monterey Peninsula CBC 6, 7, 9. *San Luis Obispo County* – 1, Avenales Station,

5 May 1970 (Wilbur fn); 1, Pozo Station, 9 Junè 1970 (Wilbur fn); "more than two dozen", Santa Barbara to Morro Bay, 21 Nov. 1970 (Cook, El Tecolote 9:3, 1971); 1, San Luis Obispo, 8 Jan. 1971 (Wilbur fn). 1969-1971 Morro Bay area CBC 13, 9, 32. *Santa Barbara County* – 1969-1971 Santa Barbara CBC 14, 14, 8.

Southern California

Ventura County – 1, Upper Ojai Valley, 19 Dec. 1969; 1, Ojai, 23 April 1970; 1, Santa Paula Creek, 21 May 1970; 1, Ojai, 8 June 1970; 1, Upper Ojai, 14 Oct. 1970; 2, Lake Casitas, 8 Jan. 1971; 2, Ojai, 19 Feb. 1971; 1, Ferndale Ranch, 4 Jan. 1972; 1, Santa Paula, 10 March 1972; 1, Upper Ojai, 17 March 1972; 2 (nesting), Oak View, summer 1972 (Wilbur fn). 1969-1970 Fillmore CBC 2, 3. *Los Angeles County* – 1969-1971 Christmas Bird Counts: Malibu 3, 3, 14; Palos Verdes Peninsula 2, 4, 0; San Fernando Valley 1, 5, 0; Pasadena 1, 5, 3; Los Angeles 0, 1, 1. *Riverside County* – 1, Idyllwild CBC, 20 Dec. 1969 (AFN 24:441, 1970; 1, Coachella Valley, 29 Dec. 1970 (AB 25:503, 1971); 1, Palm Springs, 25 Jan. 1971 (AB 25:627, 1971). *San Bernardino County* – 1969-1971 San Bernardino area CBC 2, 1, 4. 1970-1971 Yucaipa area CBC 1, 2. *Orange County* – nest, San Juan Station, 16 Feb. 1972 (Fries fn); nest, San Juan Capistrano, 16 Feb. 1972 (Fries fn). 1969-1971 Christmas Bird Counts: Huntington Harbor area 1, 2, 3; Cleveland National Forest 21, 28, 23. *San Diego County* – 5 nests, Valley Center-Escondido area, summer 1971 (Fries fn); 13 nests, Escondido-Fallbrook-Valley Center area, summer 1972 (Fries fn). 1969-1971 Christmas Bird Counts: San Diego 10, 4, 4; Oceanside-Carlsbad 14, 10, 9.

Sacramento-San Joaquin Valleys

Butte County – 1969-1971 Christmas Bird Counts: Chico 2, 7, 6; Oroville 1, 1, 1. *Glenn County* – uncommon resident, Willows area (Sacramento Nat. Wildl. Refuge bird list; Wilbur fn). *Yuba County* – 1, Marysville CBC, 30 Dec. 1969. *Yolo County* – 2, Putah Creek CBC, 27 Dec. 1971. *Sacramento County* – 2 pairs, Sacramento, summer 1969 (AFN 23:690, 1969); 2, Carmichael, spring 1971 (AB 25:968, 1971); 1969-1971 Sacramento CBC 5, 2, 3. *San Joaquin County* – 1969-1971 CBC: Stockton 2, 3, 2; Wallace-Bellota area 1, 3, 0. *Merced County* – Occasionally seen, Los Banos Wildlife Area (R. Wilbur, pers. comm.). *Fresno County* – 1970-1971 Fresno CBC 1, 12. *Tulare County* – 1, Springville, 28 April 1970 (Wilbur fn); 1, Springville, 30 Aug. 1970 (Wilbur fn); nest, Porterville, spring 1972 (T. Reed, pers. comm.). *Kern County* – 1, Granite Station CBC, 30 Dec. 1971.

Miscellaneous

Inyo County, California – 1, Furnace Creek, Death Valley, 30 Aug. and 30 Nov. 1969 (AFN 23:520, 1969; AFN 24:100, 1970). *Mono County, California* – 2, Mono Lake, 13 Dec. 1971 and 1, Mono Lake, 24 May 1972 (G. McCaskie, pers. comm.). *Nevada* – 1-4, Las Vegas, Sept.-Dec. 1969 (AFN 24:76, 1970); 1, Desert Game Range, Dec. 1969 (AFN 24:423, 1970); 1, Desert Nat. Wildl. Range, 12 July 1970 (AFN 24:704, 1970). *Oregon* – 1, California-Oregon border, Curry County, 19 Sept. 1971 (AB 26:108, 1972); 1, Winchuck River, Curry County, 3 Oct. 1971 (AB 26:108, 1972). *Baja California, Mexico* – 1, 6 miles north Ensenada, 25 and 26 Dec. 1969 (A. Craig, pers. comm).

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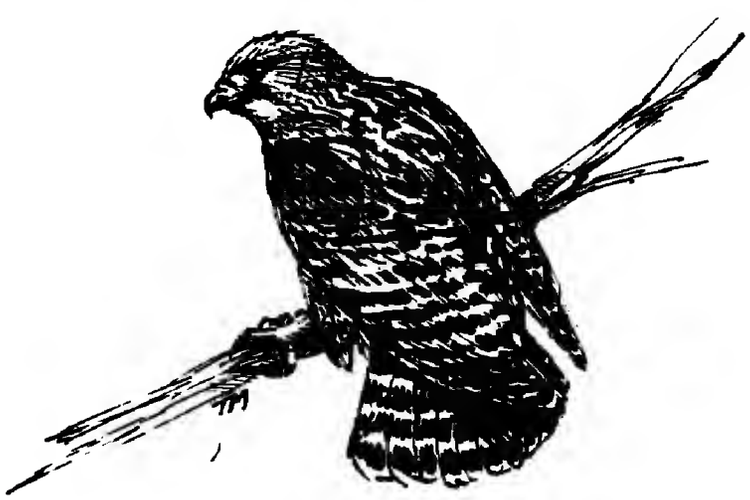

Sketch by Tim Manolis

NOTES ON PELECANIFORMES IN NEVADA

C. S. Lawson

Six species of Pelecaniformes occur or have occurred in Nevada. Two, White Pelican *(Pelecanus erythrorhynchos)* and Double-crested Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax auritus)* are common, have been well noted in the literature and will not be discussed here. Of the remaining four, Brown Pelican *(Pelecanus occidentalis)*, Blue-footed Booby *(Sula nebouxii)*, Brown Booby *(Sula leucogaster)*, and Magnificent Frigatebird *(Fregata magnificens)* only the Brown Pelican and Magnificent Frigatebird appear in the literature on Nevada birds. The occurrence of the Blue-footed Booby and Brown Booby in Nevada has been discovered only recently, their occurrence being briefly noted in American Birds (Monson 1972a).

There are no specimen records of these four species from Nevada. Photographic documentation has been obtained of the Brown Pelican and Blue-footed Booby. Sketches were made of the Brown Booby at the time of the initial sighting. The original color transparencies and sketches are deposited in the University of Nevada Museum of Biology, University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, Nevada. With the exception of the suspect 1934 record of the Brown Pelican in Churchill County near Stillwater, Nevada (Linsdale 1936), all records of occurrence for these four species are from Lakes Mead and Mohave, Clark County, in southern Nevada.

McCaskie (1970) discusses the normal range, probable points of origin, probable factors causing dispersal from normal range, seasonal distribution, age ratios of birds recorded, and survival in relation to available food of these species in the interior southwestern United States.

BROWN PELICAN

On 13 September 1971 I discovered an immature Brown Pelican at Las Vegas Bay, Lake Mead. This individual was resting in the water, preening, approximately one hundred yards east of Las Vegas Wash Marina. About ten minutes after discovery, it took flight and was observed diving three times within fifty yards of shore. An extensive series of photographs was taken.

Between 13 September and 30 September, the last date seen, presumably this same individual was observed and photographed at the same location by eleven observers on six occasions. The accompanying

photograph (Figure 1) was taken at Las Vegas Bay on 30 September. This is the first documented record for Nevada.

An error appears in the literature regarding records of occurrence in Clark County. Austin and Bradley (1971) incorrectly cite two observations of the White Pelican by Smiley (1937) in the Lake Mead area as being Brown Pelicans. McCaskie (1970) correctly cites the three previously published sight records for Nevada.

Reports of thirty-six sightings were examined. These include eight obvious and eight probable descriptions of White Pelican. The 1934 record near Stillwater, Nevada (Linsdale 1936) contained very little detail and was not considered.

To date, there have been nineteen sightings involving forty-one individuals. Except for the doubtful May record all sightings have occurred during the four month period between June and mid-October. The number of sightings occurring in each month is June – two, July – one, August – two, September – twelve, and October – two. Seventeen sightings involving thirty-nine individuals were of immature birds. The remaining two records of sightings contained sufficient detail for identification but did not clearly indicate age.

Figure 1. An immature Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) at Lake Mead, Clark County, Nevada 30 September 1971. Dorsal View.

Photo by C.S. Lawson.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY

On 27 August 1971, about 13:00, Belinda Hellings, Sally Lawson and I discovered an immature Blue-footed Booby resting in the water about seventy-five yards offshore in Las Vegas Bay, Lake Mead. An extensive series of photographs was taken of the bird in the water and in flight.

Returning 28 August to secure more photographs, I discovered a second immature individual with the first. The birds were photographed together in flight. On 16 October three individuals were observed by M. Vincent Mowbray, John Koch and Glade Koch at the same location. The third individual was apparently a second year bird as it was more extensively white on the head and lower back.

All three birds were observed diving on several occasions. Dives were usually made into the more shallow portions of the lake, primarily near the shore. Several dives were made into areas containing vegetation growing from the water. Most dives observed were from twenty-five to thirty-five feet altitude and almost always at shallow angles of descent. However, one photograph was obtained of the second year bird in a vertical dive.

Figure 2. Two immature Blue-footed Boobies (*Sula nebouxii*) at Lake Mead, Clark County, Nevada 3 November 1971. Though the color slide shows blue legs and feet, the dark heads indicate the birds have not yet attained adult plumage.

Photo by C.S. Lawson.

Sally Lawson and I explored each cove of Las Vegas Bay by boat on 3 November in an effort to locate resting sites being utilized by these birds. These efforts were successful and all three birds were photographed. The accompanying photograph (Figure 2) was taken on that date.

Twenty-five sightings were made from 27 August 1971 to 23 January 1972. All three birds were last observed on 22 December and the last individual sighting was on 23 January 1972 (Monson, 1972b). This is the first record for Nevada.

BROWN BOOBY

On 27 August 1971, about 08:30, Karl Lawson and I discovered an immature Brown Booby diving about seventy-five yards offshore in Las Vegas Bay, Lake Mead. After diving several times the bird alighted in the water about one hundred yards offshore and began to preen. Using a Bausch and Lomb 15x60 telescope, we observed the bird for almost twenty minutes. A sketch was made and the following description obtained:

The bill was large, heavy, pointed and appeared to be dark grayish. The head, neck, throat, upper chest, remiges, lesser, middle, greater coverts, back and tail were very dark brown. The lower chest, stomach, sides, flanks, undertail coverts and wing linings were dark grayish-brown. The legs and feet were not seen.

We had just completed making the sketch and notes when an adult Brown Booby appeared and also began to dive. The bird dived five times and, once, approached to within twenty-five yards of shore. It then passed from view beyond a point of land. A sketch was made and the following description obtained:

The bill was pale yellow, large heavy and pointed. The head was dark brown with some witish feathers on the forehead. The neck, throat, upper chest, remiges, lesser, middle, greater coverts, back and tail were very dark brown. The lower chest, stomach, sides, flanks, undertail coverts and wing linings were pure white with a very sharp line of demarcation between the dark brown of the upper chest and the white of the lower chest. The legs and feet were pale yellow.

The whitish feathers on the forehead indicate the Gulf of California race *S. l. brewsteri*. Dives by both birds were almost vertical and into water about seventy feet deep from altitudes of twenty-five to fifty feet.

Both birds were later seen by four other observers. A total of ten sightings were made between 27 August and 5 December. Both birds were observed together on all but three occasions. Figure 3 is a replica of the sketches.

Most sightings occurred 27 August – 5 September during the Labor Day holiday period. Recreational boating use of Lake Mead during this

last summer holiday is always very heavy. This heavy boating activity apparently disturbed the birds as they were observed farther out on the main body of the lake on each subsequent occasion. They were observed to break off dives as power boats and water skiers passed beneath them. They could not be found in Las Vegas Bay 3 November when each cove was explored by boat. They were last seen 5 December in the more protected waters of Las Vegas Bay after a severe frontal system accompanied by high winds passed through this area. All efforts to obtain photographs were unsuccessful.

Compared to the Blue-footed Booby, the low number of Brown Booby sightings is attributed to the inaccessability of the main body of the lake by either road or small boat. Extensive boating and water skiing would exert greater pressure on the Brown Booby, which fed in deeper waters, than on the Blue-footed Booby which fed along the shoreline where boating would be dangerous. The Brown Booby could be expected to move to the main body of the lake where boating is not heavy and feeding would be relatively undisturbed. This is the first record for Nevada.

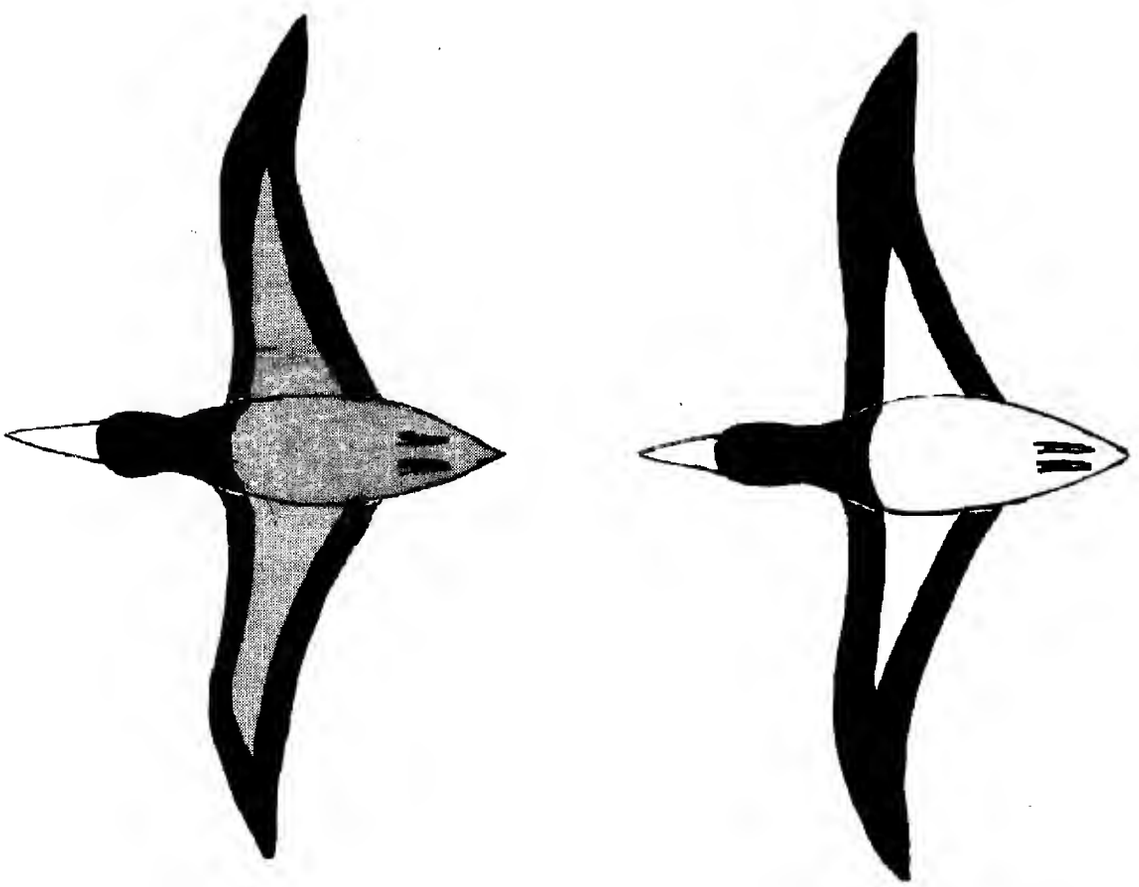

Figure 3. Replica of sketches made of two Brown Boobies (*Sula leucogaster*) 27 August 1971 at Lake Mead, Clark County, Nevada. Immature left, adult right.
Sketches by C.S. Lawson.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD

Baldwin (1947) reported sighting an individual of this species in Eldorado Canyon about thirty-five miles below Hoover Dam. On 3 September 1971 Art Johnson of the National Park Service observed a female Magnificent Frigatebird soaring above Davis Dam, Lake Mohave. Mr. Johnson was a new resident to Nevada at that time having been reassigned to this area from Key West, Florida. In Florida Mr. Johnson became very familiar with this species and was surprised to see the species here in the desert southwest. His description was clearly that of a female of this species. This is apparently the second record for Nevada.

DISCUSSION

Efforts to observe and study these four species of Pelecaniformes in Nevada are difficult at best. This is true even in known flight years. In such years they are found in the Salton Sea area of southern California and move inland along the Colorado River.

Lake Mohave is 67.5 miles long; Lake Mead is 115 miles long with over 550 miles of shoreline. Both lakes have very limited road networks approaching their respective shores and each has literally hundreds of isolated coves. In known flight years these birds could go unnoticed in Nevada unless parties of observers explored the coves of each lake by boat during late summer and early fall.

Food conditions in these fresh water lakes are excellent. Both contain a forage fish, Threadfin Shad *(Dorosoma petenense)* in enormous concentrations. Prolific spawners, Threadfin Shad attain six to eight inches in length as an adult. Breeding in early summer, peak populations coincide with post breeding wandering of these Pelecaniformes.

Feeding forays by Striped Bass *(Roccus saxatilis)*, voracious feeders, force schools of shad to the surface and often leave numbers of dead and dying fish on the surface. This is particularly true of Lake Mohave where the population of Striped Bass is larger and more well established than that of Lake Mead.

The pelican and both species of booby were observed diving into schools of shad on several occasions. These shad also attract gulls and terns. Presumably, the Magnificent Frigatebird would be attracted by feeding gulls and terns and by dying fish on the water surface.

From the sightings available for analysis it is obvious that the Brown Pelican occurs frequently though in small numbers. However, the number of Brown Pelican sightings reported may reflect the fact that

most of the public would recognize a pelican whereas few would recognize either species of booby or the Magnificent Frigatebird without prior birding experience. These four species should be looked for during late summer and early fall.

SUMMARY

The occurrence of the Brown Pelican, Blue-footed Booby, Brown Booby and Magnificent Frigatebird in Nevada is briefly discussed. The availability of food for all species is discussed. The Brown Pelican is a rare but regular visitant to Nevada during late summer and early fall. Most sightings occur during the month of September. There are no unquestionable sightings prior to June and no records after mid-October. All records indicating age are of immature birds. The literature is corrected regarding the occurrence of the Brown Pelican in Clark County. The first records of the Blue-footed Booby and Brown Booby in Nevada are reported. Comments are made on the possible influence of boating activity in relation to feeding habits of the Brown Booby in Nevada. These two species can be expected in southern Nevada when they are also present in the lower Colorado River basin or the Salton Sea area of southern California. A second sighting of the Magnificent Frigatebird in Nevada is reported.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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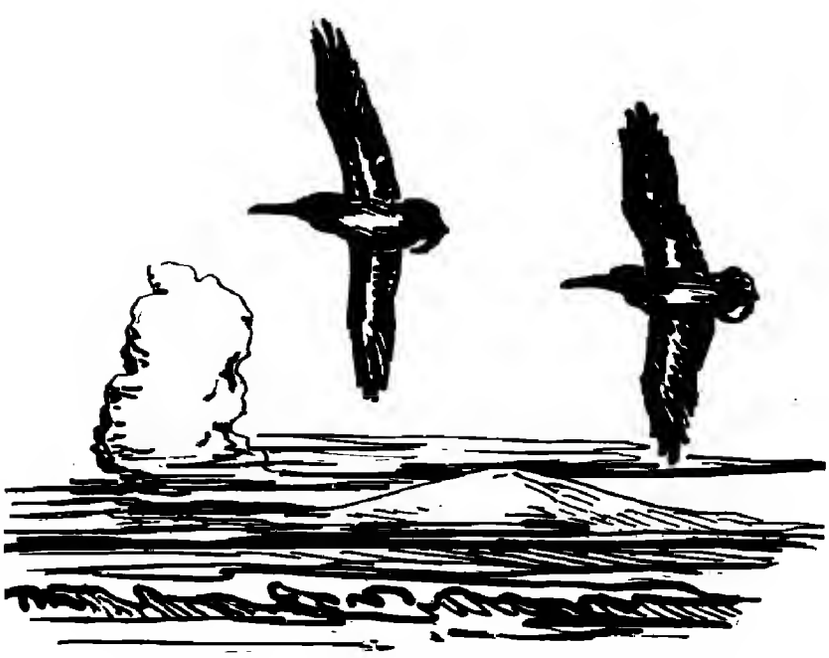

Sketch by Tim Manolis

NOTES

FIRST RECORD FOR THE SWAMP SPARROW IN WASHINGTON STATE

On 25 February 1973 I discovered a Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) at Lake Sammamish State Park, King County, Washington. The bird responded to "pishing" directed at a Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) which was singing from a shrubby line of willow (*Salix sp.*) and blackberry (*Rubus sp.*) bordering the parking lot at the park. A Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) was also present in the same bush. The bird responded well for several minutes providing four unobstructed views at eye level from a distance of fifteen feet (using 8x36 Bushnell binoculars).

The following description is abstracted from notes recorded immediately following the sighting:

> Size and shape approximately that of a Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*), clearly smaller than the accompanying Song Sparrow; breast entirely dark gray with indistinct broad streaking, shading to whitish on the belly; flanks buffy; face gray; an elongated triangular post-ocular spot, reddish-brown, streaked and margined with black; a short white malar stripe edged with blackish; no obvious white throat patch; crown reddish-brown, streaked and margined with black, divided by a narrow whitish central crown stripe; bright reddish-brown shoulders; wings

Figure 1. A Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) found at Lake Sammamish State Park, King County, Washington, on 8 April 1973.

Photo by Dennis Paulson

without obvious wingbars; back and wings streaked reddish-brown and black; tail rounded, outer rectrices apparently reddish-brown; legs flesh-colored; bill small, darkish with a paler base, especially on the lower mandible.

Attempts at verification that day failed, and the bird could not be found later that week. On 8 April 1973 I observed what was presumably the same individual in the brushy understory of a Pacific Willow (*Salix lasiandra*) woodland 100 yards west of the site of the original observation. The bird was still in winter plumage apparently identical to that of the original sighting. A number of local birdwatchers observed the bird later that day confirming the identification, and several recognizable color photographs were obtained by Dennis Paulson, Department of Zoology, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. A duplicate of one of these photographs (Figure 1) is on file at the San Diego Natural History Museum, San Diego, California. To my knowledge the bird was not seen subsequently.

This is apparently the first recorded occurrence of the species in the State of Washington. The two Oregon records are of single birds observed in late December 1968 near Eugene (Audubon Field Notes 23:513, 1969) and 5 April 1969 near Medford (Audubon Field Notes 23:619, 1969). The scarcity of records from the Northwest is perhaps due to a relative scarcity of observers, as the Swamp Sparrow has been recorded in California annually since about 1960 (Audubon Field Notes 21:456, 1967) in favored locations from San Diego to Humboldt County. Most California records are from the immediate vicinity of the coast between November and March, though records span the period from 2 October (Audubon Field Notes 20:90, 1966) to late April (McCaskie and De Benedictis, Annotated Field List: Birds of Northern California, 1966), and a scattering of records comes from the Central Valley, the eastern basin region, and the vicinity of the Salton Sea. The Swamp Sparrow may be expected as a rare but regular winter visitor coastwise in all the Pacific states. *Eugene Hunn, Department of Anthropology, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98105.*

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